

Forest Credit

***347. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:** Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the forest cover is dwindling in a number of areas in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise;

(c) the measures proposed to be taken to ensure sustained growth of forest cover without compensating on the interest of the tribal people living in the forest areas;

(d) whether giving 'Forest Credit' to the forest range is showing increase in the forest cover on the lines of the 'Carbon Credit' programme being implemented world-wide; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir. As per the assessments made by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), the figures for the forest cover of the country in the last three biennial assessments are given below:—

(Area in Km ²)		
1999	2001	2003
637,293	675,538	678,333

(b) The details of forest cover during the last three assessments are given State-wise in the enclosed Statement (See below).

(c) Government have taken the following measures for sustained growth of forest cover without compromising the interests of the tribal people living in the forest area:—

- (i) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans, Forest Development Agencies and eliciting people's participation through Joint Forest Management (JFM).
 - (ii) Implementation of National Afforestation Programme (NAP) Scheme for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining forest lands through two-tier decentralized mechanism of Forest Development Agency (FDA) at forest division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at village level.
 - (iii) Providing assistance to the States/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored schemes and externally aided projects for protection and conservation of forests.
 - (iv) A restructured scheme for Grants-in-Aid for greening India has been launched in 2005-06 to promote production and use of quality planting material in tree planing.
 - (v) States have been advised to constitute State-level coordination committees under chairmanship of Chief Secretaries for eliciting cooperation of all land-owning Departments for contributing towards increase in forest and tree cover.
 - (vi) Guidelines for rationalizing felling and transit regulations for tree species grown on non-forest private lands to promote large-scale afforestation in non-forest areas.
 - (vii) A Multi-Stake Holder Partnership (MSP) framework for afforestation of degraded lands has been mooted.
 - (viii) Ministry of Environment and Forests has requested all the State/ Union Territory Governments not to resort to eviction of forest dwellers, including tribals, other than ineligible encroachers till the complete survey is carried out for recognition of such people and their right on forest land as provided in the guidelines dated 18.9.1990 issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- (d) and (e) No mechanism for providing 'Forest Credit' to the forest areas/cover is available in the country.

Statement*State-wise Forest Cover as per last three assessments*(Area in Km²)

Sl. No.	State/Union Territories	Forest Cover (1999)	Forest Cover (2001)	Forest Cover (2003)
1	2	3	4	5
1	Andhra Pradesh	44,229	44,637	44,419
2	Arunachal Pradesh	68,847	68,045	68,019
3	Assam	23,688	27,714	27,826
4	Bihar	26,474*	5,720	5,558
5	Chhattisgarh	—	56,448	55,998
6	Delhi	88	111	170
7	Goa	1,251	2,095	2,156
8	Gujarat	12,965	15,152	14,946
9	Haryana	964	1,754	1,517
10	Himachal Pradesh	13,082	14,360	14,353
11	Jammu & Kashmir	20,441	21,237	21,267
12	Jharkhand	—	22,637	22,716
13	Karnataka	32,467	36,991	36,449
14	Kerala	10,323	15,560	15,577
15	Madhya Pradesh	1,31,830**	77,265	76,429
16	Maharashtra	46,672	47,482	46,865
17	Manipur	17,384	16,926	17,219
18	Meghalaya	15,633	15,584	16,839
19	Mizoram	18,338	17,494	18,430
20	Nagaland	14,164	13,345	13,609
21	Orissa	47,033	48,838	48,366
22	Punjab	1,412	2,432	1,580

1	2	3	4	5
23	Rajasthan	13,871	16,367	15,826
24	Sikkim	3,118	3,193	3,262
25	Tamil Nadu	17,078	21,482	22,643
26	Tripura	5745	7065	8093
27	Uttar Pradesh	34,016***	13,746	14,118
28	Uttaranchal	—	23,938	24,465
29	West Bengal	8,362	10,693	12,343
30	A & N Islands	7,006	6,930	6,964
31	Chandigarh	7	9	15
32	Dadra & N. Haveli	202	219	225
33	Daman & Diu	3	6	8
34	Lakshadweep	0	27	23
35	Pondicherry	0	36	40
GRAND TOTAL		637,293	675,538	678,333

*It includes areas of Jharkhand also.

**It includes areas of Chhattisgarh also.

***It includes areas of Uttaranchal also.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, the thrust of the question is about forest credit. Unfortunately the hon. Minister has given a negative answer saying, "No mechanism for providing 'Forest Credit' to the forest areas/cover is available in the country." Sir, the Government can achieve twin objectives by providing forest credit to the tribals and the communities living in the forest areas. By giving this credit, they can create job opportunities and they can arrest the depletion of forest areas. Unfortunately, the Minister's reply shows that the Government has not applied their mind even though the Rashtrapati of the nation has expressed concern on this. So, I would like to know as to why the Government is not extending Forest Credit to them.

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, as I have said in my reply, there is no mechanism for providing Forest Credit in this country. However, Carbon

Credit is there, as per the Kyoto Protocol. There are three flexible innovative mechanisms; one is CDM; the Annex 1 parties meet the developed countries to invest in GHG mitigation projects in developing countries. As per the Credit Emission Reduction, the scale is that 1 CER is equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide, and in a layman's language, this is called Carbon Credit. There are various sectors in which the CDMs are available, say, renewable energy, energy efficiency, etc. Also, these CDMs are available in both afforestation and reforestation. We are the first country in the world for giving host country approval in CDMs in this country. So far we have given two host approvals in A & R sector.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, the hon. Minister is not aware of the fact that credit from banking institutions and other institutions are not going to the forest areas. When I was the Minister, even for preparing baskets from the roots of the plants in the forest areas, the banks were not giving them credit. Then, I went personally to all these hilly areas and saw to it that the credit facility was given. What is happening today is that under the DRI Scheme for Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, particularly, living in the rural areas, the bank has to give one per cent of the total credit to them. But that is not happening in practice. I would like to know whether the Minister of Environment and Forests, in order to give assistance to the tribal people as well as other communities living in these areas, is coordinating with the Finance Ministry to find out why they have not implemented it. Even one per cent has not been given to them. This is the state of affairs today. I would like to know whether the Government is aware of this fact.

SHRI AMAR SINGH: Sir, this is a serious matter, and I am associating myself with it.

श्री खन्नारायण पाणि: सर, मैं भी एसोसिएट करता हूँ।

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): Sir, the concept of 'Carbon Credit', which has been equated with 'Forest Credit' by the hon. Member, arose on the basic concept that defaulters should be fined. So far as Carbon Credit is concerned, whoever be the person or the project proponent wishing to instal a very big industry, out of which the carbon emission will be more, as per the Kyoto Protocol, as mentioned by my colleague, this pollution load can be converted into Carbon

Credit Cards (CCRs), and these can be purchased by the developed countries, where these developed countries were not able to reduce their emission. In other words, developed countries are having more and more emissions; those who are not able to reduce their own technology are compensating the developing countries like India, where we are getting the new technology by setting up these industries. So, this is the concept behind the carbon credit. The basic concept of carbon credit is that a defaulter must be fined, or, the aggrieved person must be compensated in terms of money or in terms of technical assistance. It cannot be equated with the forest credit. What does it mean? Then, we are diverting the forest land; and those who are living in the forest area, may be tribal people or the local forest dwellers, may be shifted. The Government takes the responsibility to relocate them and to compensate them by giving the special package. Earlier, Shrimati Brinda Karat asked a very legitimate question: how many private people are getting the forestland and she also said that diversions were taking place. Yes, it is true that diversions are taking place through the Forest Conservation Act, which is not a prohibitory law; it is a regulatory law. This country needs developmental activity, for which we have to give up our forestland. But that does not mean that we have to give up the entire forest land. We have a system in terms of the NPV, which is the Net Profit Value. We fix the NPV. When we give forestland to an individual, that value must be collected. Apart from that, there is a system of CAMPA. CAMPA means that some funds are to be collected. When we give two acres of land to an individual for putting up an industry, then, we collect four acres of land...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let me ask the hon. Member. Are you satisfied?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: No, Sir, because he has not given the answer. Forget about the carbon credit, no credit is given to the people. I want to know whether the target is being achieved. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI A. RAJA: Sir, the forest credit is being collected in some other mode...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, the Forest Ministry is eating away the land. It is responsible for the loss of forests ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI A. RAJA: Sir, with your permission, I want to share something. The Forests Conservation Act came into force in the year 1980. Before 1980, without any regulation, without any rational application of mind,

whichever Government was there, used to give 25000 hectares of forest land per year. Now, it is not so. After 1980, so far we have given including the Government departments, only 11 lakh hectares.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, in five years, it is 7.5 lakh hectares.

श्री अमर सिंह: सभापति जी, धन्यवाद। राजा साहब ने किसी भी प्रश्न का सीधा उत्तर नहीं दिया हमारे साथी का जो प्रश्न था, वह यह था कि वित्त मंत्रालय और जंगल मंत्रालय के समन्वय का ... (व्यवधान)...

एक माननीय सदस्य: जंगल मंत्रालय नहीं वन मंत्रालय।

श्री अमर सिंह: जी हां, वन मंत्रालय। मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि पिछले कई वर्षों से प्रतिबंध होने के बावजूद जंगलों से कीमती लकड़ी का काटा जाना और निर्यात किया जाना जारी है, जिसका पर्यावरण पर विपरीत प्रभाव पड़ रहा है। पिछले दो वर्षों में किन-किन देशों को कितनी मात्रा में लकड़ी निर्यात की गई? क्या यह सही है कि 13.43 लाख हेक्टेयर ... (व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: अमर सिंह जी आप जल्दी प्रश्न कीजिए ... (व्यवधान) आप घड़ी को देख लें और पहले क्वेश्चन कर लें।

श्री अमर सिंह: जी सर। मंत्री जी, क्या यह सही है कि 13.43 लाख हेक्टेयर वन भूमि पर अवैध कब्जा है? अगर कब्जा है तो इसका ब्यौरा क्या है? राजा साहब, इसे खाली कराने के लिए आपने अपने राज्य में क्या किया है?

श्री नमो नारायण मीणा: सर, जहां तक आपने जमीन पर अवैध कब्जे की बात की है, इसमें एन्क्रोचमेंट के नाम पर डेढ़ लाख हेक्टेयर पर जो अनऑथोराइज्ड ऑक्купेशन थे उनसे वे खाली कराए गए हैं।

जहां तक लकड़ी के निर्यात की बात है, यह हमने नहीं किया है और सारे देश में फॉरेस्ट का जो कवर है, वह इन्क्रीज़ हुआ है।

श्री जयंती लाल बरोट: मैं मंत्री महोदय से वन क्षेत्र में पीने के पानी की योजना के संबंध में जानना चाहता हूँ। वनवासी उन्हीं के क्षेत्र में रहने के लिए और काम-धंधे के लिए जब बैंक से लोन मांगते हैं तो बैंक वाले कहते हैं कि आपके पास अपनी मिल्कियत की ज़मीन नहीं है, इसलिए क्या आप उन्हें कुछ छूट देंगे, जिससे वनवासी अपने क्षेत्र में रहते हुए, वहीं पर काम-धंधा कर सकें और साथ ही बैंक से ऋण प्राप्त कर सकें?

श्री नमो नारायण मीणा: सर, पानी के लिए जो इन्होंने कहा है ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: आप इनके पास इस क्वेश्चन का जवाब लिखित में भेज दीजिए। Question Hour is over.